

# THE WILD LAKESHORE

MONONA LAKEFRONT PARK

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*Prepared for:*

**THE CITY OF MADISON &  
THE LAKE MONONA WATERFRONT  
AD-HOC COMMITTEE**

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# THE WILD LAKESHORE

## MONONA LAKEFRONT PARK

Madison's Aldo Leopold said, "When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect."

"Wild Lakeshore" is a vision for Madison's next generation of land stewardship. Building on the legacies of Leopold, the Ho Chunk Nation, Nolen, Wright and contemporary climate activists, the lakeshore of the future offers a model for Madison's urban growth and re-wilding at the same time.



Situated on a narrow isthmus, the identity of Wisconsin's capital city is inexorably linked to its extraordinary lake-filled landscape. "Wild Lakeshore" offers an unprecedented opportunity for Madison to redefine its relationship to Lake Monona, and more broadly, nature in the city. By connecting the lakefront to the city with connective green infrastructure, expanding territories for parkland and softening its shoreline, the scheme envisions a place where city and nature are inseparable.

Through design we aim to create an extraordinary lakefront that captures the very essence of Madison. The "Wild Lakeshore" offers an innovative model for urban living, where nature, along with outdoor recreation, social gatherings, cultural activities and economic opportunity — are welcoming and accessible to all.

### INSPIRED BY COMMUNITY

"Wild Lakeshore" is inspired by Madisonians. We engaged and listened carefully to learn what community members love about Madison's lakefront as well as its biggest challenges.

#### What's Great About The Lakefront Today?



"Biking the Capital City Trail"



"The Incredible Views"



"The Water & Waterfront Events"

#### What Are The Biggest Lakefront Challenges?



"Difficult to Access"



"A Narrow Corridor & Poor Water Quality"



"Few Places for Families"

In response, "Wild Lakeshore" amplifies the qualities, features and activities that already make the Lake Monona waterfront great, including the Capital City Trail and infrastructure for the myriad of waterfront events and activities including water skiing, ice-skating, the Iron Man competition, kayaking, fishing and wind sailing. Simultaneously, the scheme addresses the site's significant challenges of limited access, narrow width and poor water quality.

### A BOLD, FLEXIBLE FRAMEWORK

Organized by a bold, yet flexible framework, the scheme is composed of four key parts:

- Transform John Nolen Drive into a Green Boulevard
- Re-wild the Shoreline to Improve Lake Health and Water Quality
- Stitch the City to the Lake with Green Streets, Crossings and Caps
- Animate the Lakefront with Piers and Parks that Welcome All

This framework shapes a clear and ambitious vision for Lake Monona, while remaining flexible for continued public input, technical constraints and funding as opportunities evolve. This adaptability will be critical to the long-term success of the project's future development.

### GREAT PARKS DEFINE GREAT CITIES

Ultimately, we aim to create an extraordinary new lakefront park for and with Madisonians, with places for people to play and connect with nature and together celebrate life on the lake.



#### LAW PARK NORTH

- 1 KING STREET PIER AND BOATHOUSE
- 2 THE COVE
- 3 RESTAURANT AND EVENT VENUE
- 4 DOG RUN
- 5 EVENT AND PERFORMANCE LAWN
- 6 HILLSIDE PLAYGROUND
- 7 NEW DEVELOPMENT
- 8 WILSON STREET PIER

#### MONONA TERRACE

- 9 MONONA TERRACE EXPANSION
- 10 PEDESTRIAN BOARDWALK
- 11 CAPITAL CITY TRAIL
- 12 FISHING PIER
- 13 ROOFTOP AMPHITHEATER
- 14 NEW ROOFTOP ACCESS

#### LAW PARK SOUTH

- 15 HAMILTON STREET PIER AND BOAT LAUNCH
- 16 HAMMOCK GROVE
- 17 SWING PLAYGROUND
- 18 SANDY BEACH, PICNIC AREA, AND FOOD STAND
- 19 HAMILTON STREET FOOTBRIDGE
- 20 BROOM ST CROSSING
- 21 UNDERPASS

#### THE CAUSEWAY

- 22 CAUSEWAY BALCONIES
- 23 BRITTINGHAM FOOTBRIDGE
- 24 CAPITAL CITY TRAIL

#### OLIN PARK

- 25 DISCOVERY PIER
- 26 SUN LAWN
- 27 OUTDOOR CLASSROOM
- 28 LEARN-TO-KAYAK/ CANOE COURSE
- 29 WOODLAND PLAYGROUND
- 30 NATURE CENTER
- 31 BOAT RENTALS AND MOORING
- 32 MADISON PARKS DEPARTMENT
- 33 FUTURE DEVELOPMENT SITE
- 34 LAKESIDE CROSSING
- 35 CAPITAL CITY TRAIL
- 36 WINGRA CREEK CROSSING



THE WILD LAKESHORE

# LAKESHORE FRAMEWORK



# A NEW LAKESHORE IN FOUR STEPS

A Bold and Flexible Framework

## 1. Transform John Nolen Drive into a Green Boulevard

John Nolen Drive dominates the edge of Madison — it's width covers over two thirds of the lakefront and it carries noisy and fast-moving traffic in and out of the city. In its current state, John Nolen Drive creates unwelcoming and unsafe conditions for people and bikes moving along and trying to cross it.

We propose transforming John Nolen Drive from a highway into a park boulevard. By reducing lanes, adding street trees, and improving intersections and other amenities, John Nolen Drive can serve as both a celebratory gateway, a green corridor and a safe, multi-modal street for all. Moreover this transformation will more than double the land available for Madison's future lakefront park

## 2. Rewild the Shoreline to Improve Lake Health and Water Quality

Today, Lake Monona is burdened by water quality issues. The health of the lake is significantly compromised by agricultural and urban runoff. While the problems are the result of watershed-wide issues, significant improvements can be made by protecting, reshaping and enriching the shoreline edge to capture and filter stormwater prior to emptying into the lake.

We propose a green shoreline with new topography, native planting and constructed wetlands—a living edge. This shoreline will serve as a model for urban development that improves human and environmental health alike.

## 3. Stitch the City to the Lake with Green Streets, Crossings and Caps

The natural topography of the lakefront, John Nolen Drive and the railways create significant physical barriers to access Lake Monona.

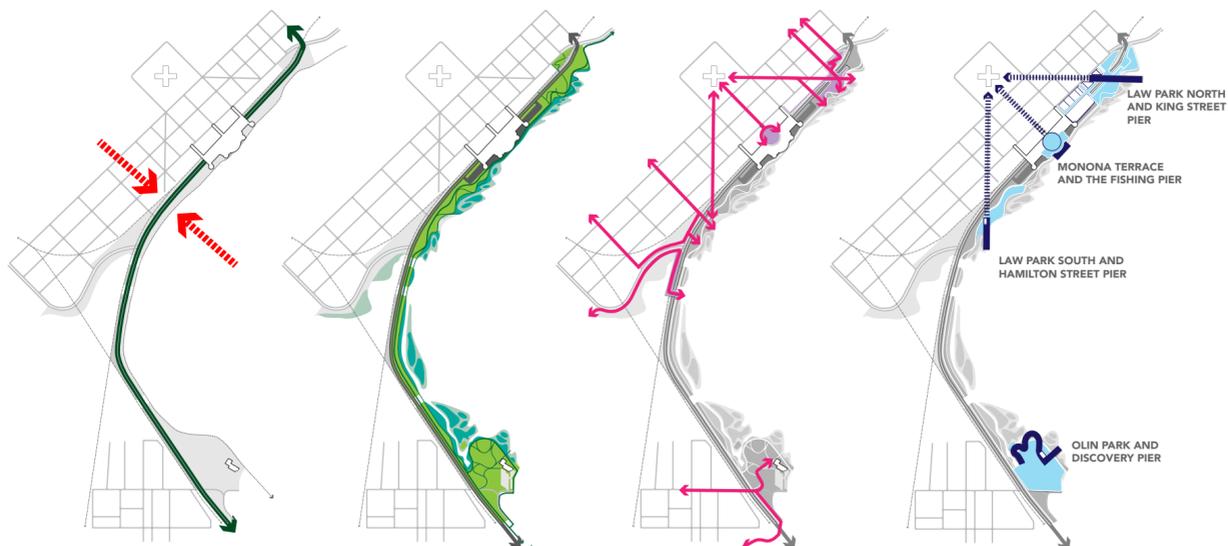
To address the significant access challenges, we propose ten strategic routes to the water along key city streets. The most significant amplify the diagonal routes that radiate from City Hall, dramatically improving physical and visual connections from the city core. These connections include at-grade crossings, pedestrian bridges and an underpass. Together they emphatically connect the city to the lake.

## 4. Animate the Lakefront with Piers and Parks that Welcome All

While Lake Monona's waterfront is already active with events such as the Ironman Competition, ice boat races, and Ride the Drive, the new Lakefront increases the range and type of spaces for events that celebrate diverse cultural heritages, multi-generational events, family space for picnics, youth activities and programs, and public art and performances.

Four parks — each centered around a destination pier — offer recreational amenities for nearby residents and families and regional visitors alike. Together they situate the edge of Lake Monona as the social center of the city and region — reflecting the values of community, togetherness and stewardship. The "Wild Shoreline" welcomes all to come together and celebrate a nature-rich life on the lake.

This framework shapes a clear and ambitious vision for Lake Monona, while remaining flexible for continued public input, technical constraints, and funding as opportunities evolve. This adaptability will be critical to the long-term success of the project's future development.



1. Transform John Nolen Drive into a Green Boulevard

2. Re-wild the Shoreline to Improve Lake Health and Water Quality.

3. Stitch the City to the Lake with Green Streets, Crossings and Caps

4. Animate the Lakefront with Piers and Parks that Welcome All

←→ John Nolen Drive

■ Park & Green Space  
 ■ Shoreline & Wetlands  
 ←→ Bike Trail  
 ←→ Pedestrian Trail

↔ Lakefront Connections  
 ■ Cap Park

↔ Piers  
 ■ Parks

THE WILD LAKESHORE

# LAKESHORE PLACES



## LAW PARK SOUTH AND HAMILTON STREET PIER

Centered around the new Hamilton Street Pier, Law Park South offers a thick green shoreline and multiple opportunities to access and enjoy Lake Monona, including a sandy beach, a boat launch and boardwalk trails. Upland, the park includes places for families and social gatherings, such as nature-based play spaces, hammock groves, BBQ grills and picnic areas. New connections along Hamilton and Broom Streets, and to Brittingham Park, emphatically link the park to the nearby and rapidly growing Basset and State-Langdon neighborhoods, as well as the UW campus.

### Nature-based Management and Stewardship of the Land

Along the length of the waterfront, our design shapes the land into a rolling landscape evoking the moraine and drumlin landscapes of Southeast Wisconsin. These earthworks, along with constructed wetlands at the water's edge, will capture, treat and filter stormwater and urban runoff. Furthermore, the lakefront will be planted with native species found in the area's most charismatic landscapes: Tall-grass prairies, Oak savannas, Oak woodlands, and Tamarack swamps.

This 're-wilding' of the land, inspired by the Ho-Chunk people's sustainable stewardship and land management practices, and Leopold's "land ethic," enables a nature-focused and resilient approach to improving lake water quality and biodiversity and expanding natural habitat areas.

In addition to improved environmental health, the introduction of a natural waterfront will increase the health of Madisonians, with places to pause and reflect, exercise and play. The lakefront will be a place that inspires imagination, restores health and well-being, and delights the soul.



TALL GRASS PRAIRIE OAK SAVANNA OAK WOODLAND TAMARACK SWAMP

## MONONA TERRACE AND FISHING PIER

Already one of Madison's most popular destinations, Monona Terrace offers stunning elevated views to the lake and back to the city as well as the best fishing destination on the water. We propose two changes to amplify these assets and make them emphatically open and welcoming to all: 1) a graceful, circular ramp to the roof terrace, and 2) a wide fishing pier at the water. Together, along with significant new planting and greening, these interventions will fully integrate the iconic building with the park.

### Honoring and Interpreting History

"Wild Lakeshore" celebrates the drama and power of the site's layered history as it brings forward new narratives that reflect the growth and diversity of Madison today.

Our plan celebrates John Nolen's vision for the city by re-connecting and extending his signature diagonal streets over the water, forming two new piers along King and South Hamilton Streets. Inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright's Monona Terrace and unrealized Boathouse, we use circles to shape the lakefront park's signature destinations.



FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT SKETCH FOR MONONA TERRACE

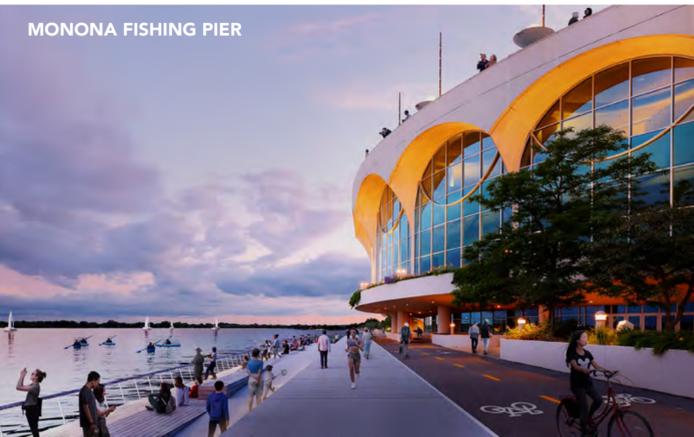
- 1 MONONA TERRACE EXPANSION
- 2 FISHING PIER
- 3 ROOFTOP AMPHITHEATER
- 4 NEW ROOFTOP ACCESS



CAPITAL CITY TRAIL



SANDY BEACH AND BOAT LAUNCH



MONONA FISHING PIER



MONONA TERRACE ROOF

# OLIN PARK AND DISCOVERY PIER

Standing in contrast the eventfulness of Law Park, Olin Park is envisioned as a passive and ecologically-focused park, not unlike Turville Park, it's neighbor to the south. The new Olin Park is shaped by the land swap, described above, which creates protected marshland and wide, soft shorelines — spaces to explore a unique lakeside environment via new kayak trails. Set within the marsh and surrounding woodland will be a series of nature-based and environmental education programs including a nature center, woodland playground and learn-to-kayak water course. Winding through the park and extending over the water on axis with views to the capitol, is a dramatic Discovery Pier.

### Equitable Access and Growth

Madison's population is predicted to grow by 35% over the next 30 years. With plans to attract more people to Downtown Madison through the Alliant Energy Center and Destination District, attaching the Town of Madison, and other projects, the "Wild Lakeshore" anticipates Madison's unprecedented growth and the need for more open spaces as it lends cohesion and contemporary identity to the city.

At the upland edge of Law Park North and South, new development is encouraged to line and face the waterfront. Within Olin Park, we have identified areas for the potential development of multi-family housing. Development here would not only address Madison's acute need for more housing, but would also activate the park and bring a potential revenue source for ongoing maintenance and operations.

↔ New Loop Trails  
↔ Existing Trails



The transformative potential of the "Wild Lakeshore" extends city-wide. In creating a new lakefront park on Lake Monona, the city's urban centers are connected — the Capitol, UW Campus, and Alliant Energy Center — as well as its open space system of parks and trails. To ensure equitable access to the lakefront, we propose a system of "Loop Trails" connecting nearby neighborhoods. These loops are especially critical to southside neighborhoods that have historically seen disinvestment and a lack of connection to amenities and green spaces.

# LAW PARK NORTH AND KING STREET PIER

The transformation of Law Park North is dramatic, creating a new lake frontage for neighborhoods north of the capitol, a city-wide civic and cultural hub, and a destination drawing visitors from the region and beyond. The park bridges John Nolen Drive, creating opportunities for multiple city connections and large-scale gathering spaces.

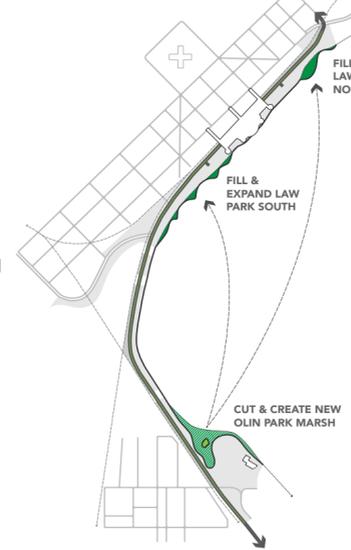
### A Constellation of Inclusive Program

The lakeshore includes a constellation of program, concentrated at four anchors around the piers. While each anchor has a distinct character, each area includes features and amenities for water-based recreation (boat launches, fishing), arts & culture (small and large performance venues), and neighborhood-oriented activities (playspaces and dog runs).

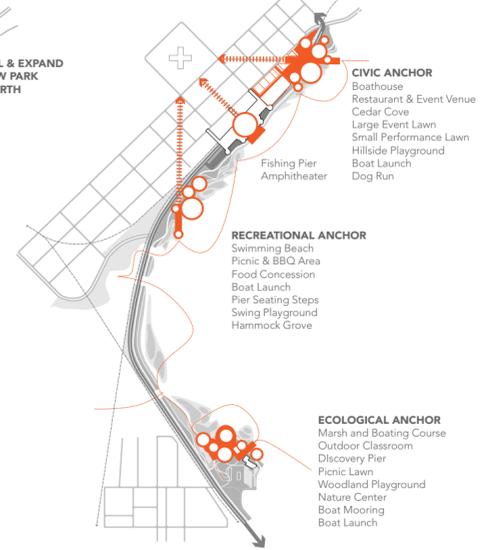
### Reshaping the Shoreline

Reshaping the lake edge will restore a natural, curving shoreline in all areas of the project and create more generous park spaces in Law Park. To do this, we propose a "land swap" moving land from Olin Park to Law Park, rather than adding significant amounts of fill material. The result will be a healthier, more varied, resilient and generous shoreline throughout the project.

### Reshaping the Shoreline



### A Constellation of Inclusive Program



# LAKESHORE IMPLEMENTATION



# IMPLEMENTATION PHASING

A Roadmap to Realization

## PHASE 1

### The Green Boulevard and Key Connections

Leveraging the work already begun on the John Nolen Causeway, the project's first phase will focus on transforming the full extent of John Nolen Drive into a green boulevard. With the overall narrowing of the roadway and elimination of up to two lanes of traffic, this work will make way for a significant increase in the size of Law Park, setting the stage for improvements in later phases.

Phase 1 will also include improvements to key at-grade intersections at Broom and Lakeside Streets, as well as connections on structure (the Wilson Street Pier and the Causeway Boardwalk). It will integrate new and improved multi-modal trails and synthesize comprehensive stormwater management. Phase 1 will see the full transformation of John Nolen Drive as a multi-modal corridor and dramatic new gateway the city, complete with new connections to the lakefront and initial measures that improve water quality.

## PHASE 2

### The Ecological Anchor: Olin Park and Discovery Pier

Phase 2 emphasizes equity with major park and shoreline improvements at Olin Park. Nearest to Madison's Southside neighborhoods, Olin Park can most directly serve communities of color, which have experienced historic disinvestment. Improvements will include quality of life amenities such as playgrounds, educational spaces, spaces for families and recreation. Integrated within the "Wild Lakeshore" these spaces will be unique to Madison and will make nature part of daily life in the city.

Shoreline modifications at Olin Park will establish extensive new marshes, and strategically enable proposed reshaping of the lake edge at Law Park in future phases.

When complete, Phase 2 will see the transformation of Olin Park into an ecologically-rich park filled with nature, water-based recreation, and educational facilities.

## PHASE 3

### The Resilient Lakeshore

Phase 3 extends lake edge modifications to the northernmost extent of the project boundary--establishing soft and green shoreline, with new coves, beaches, and constructed wetlands that capture and filter storm water and urban runoff.

Along with these significant ecological initiatives, this Phase 3 includes the development of the Capital City Trail from a single shared-use path into a separated use facility that gracefully winds through prairie and rolling meadows, and over marshes and wetlands.

When complete, Phase 3 will realize the project's wide resilient lakeshore completing the transformation of how the city manages storm water and runoff entering Lake Monona.

## PHASE 4

### The Civic Anchor: Law Park North and King St. Pier

With John Nolen Drive, the shoreline, and Olin Park transformations realized, the project is poised to take on its most complex project--Law Park North and the King Street Pier. These park improvements will serve as the waterfront's civic anchor, offering spaces for large events, festivals, and gatherings, as well as opportunities for significant revenue generation (at the restaurant and event venue and development areas).

This new "Civic Anchor" is strategically timed to allow for fundraising and partnership building prior to the start of design and construction.

When complete, it will engage neighborhoods north of the capitol with new lakeside frontage and a city-wide destination that draws visitors from the region and beyond.

## PHASE 5

### The Recreational Anchor: Law Park South and Hamilton St. Pier

Phase 5 follows the development of the project's north and south anchors, adding exciting recreational amenities at Law Park South.

The development of this "Recreational Anchor", which includes a sandy beach, new pier and boat launch, and picnic area, is strategically timed to take advantage of the momentum gained after a successful realization of Law Park North.

When complete, Law Park South and the Hamilton Street Pier will link to other nearby and beloved parks including Brittingham and the Zoo, creating a continuous network of signature open spaces throughout central Madison.

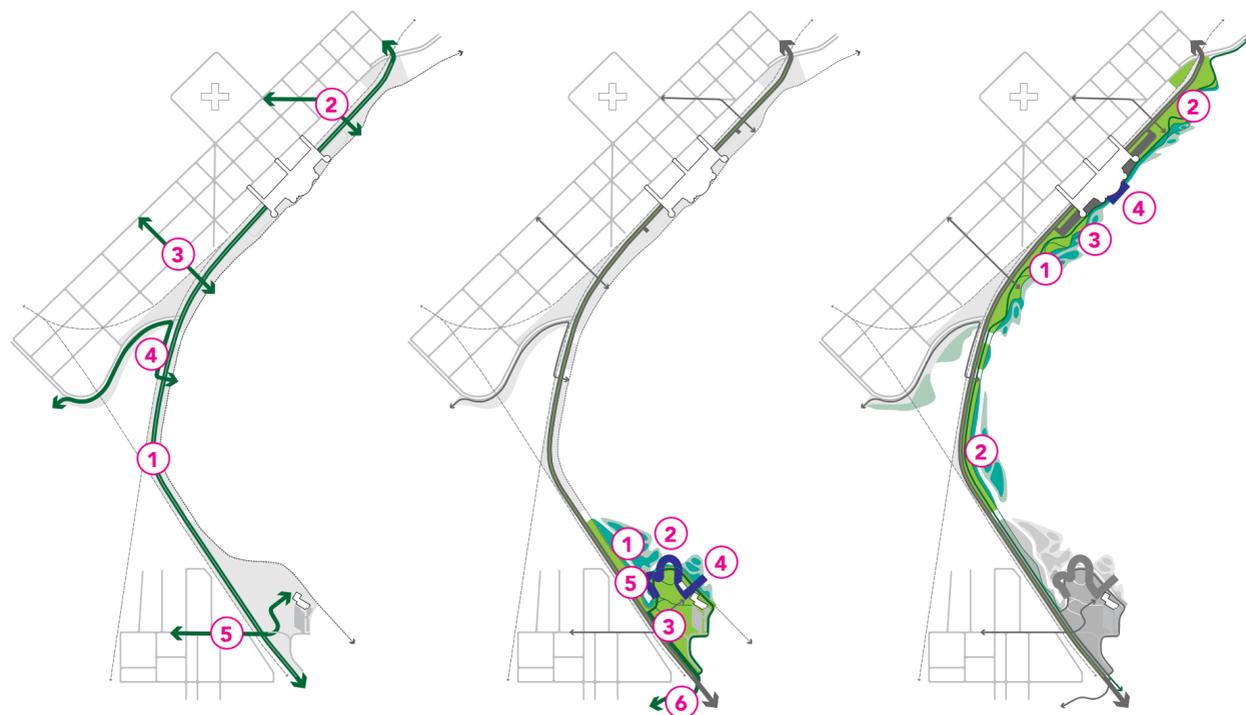
## PHASE 6

### Monona Terrace and Waterfront Development

The project is fully realized with a suite of improvements at Monona Terrace, all meant to connect and create more open and welcoming public spaces. Phase 6 also includes ongoing waterfront development projects which will likely come online as the lakefront park takes shape.

Updates to Monona Terrace will coincide with the expansion project, leveraging the momentum created by this parallel project.

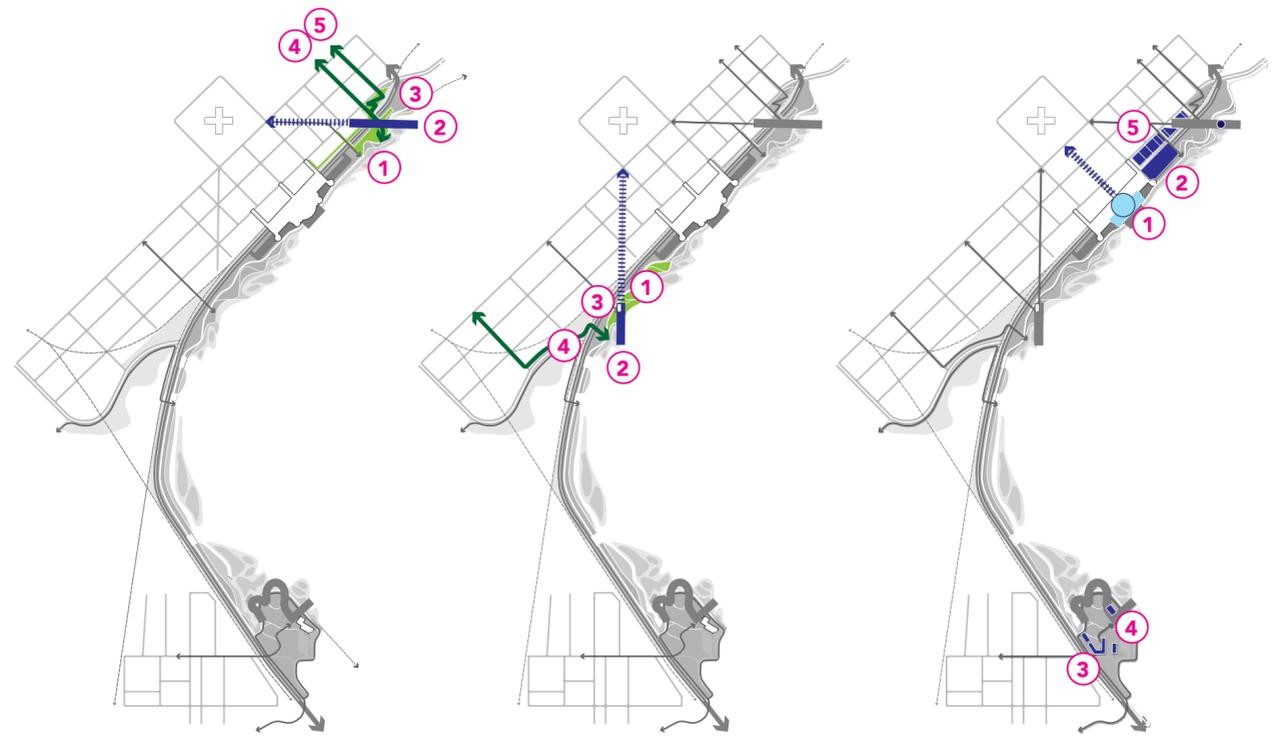
When complete, the Monona Terrace improvements will realize the full integration of the city's signature waterfront building with its new lakefront.



1. John Nolen Drive & Causeway
2. Law Park Footbridge
3. Broom Street Crossing
4. Causeway Boardwalk
5. Lakeside Street Crossing

1. Olin Park Shoreline
2. Discovery Pier
3. Woodland Playground
4. Kayak Rentals
5. Outdoor Classroom
6. Wingra Creek Connection

1. Capital City Trail (Separated-Use Path)
2. Causeway & Law Park Shoreline
3. Constructed Wetlands
4. Monona Fishing Pier



1. Law Park North Cap Park
2. King Street Pier
3. Lakefront Restaurant & Event Space
4. Hancock Street Crossing
5. Franklin Street Crossing

1. Law Park South
2. Hamilton Street Pier
3. Food Concession
4. Basset Underpass

1. Monona Terrace Roof
2. Monona Terrace Expansion
3. Olin Park Multi-family Housing
4. Olin Park Nature Center
5. Development at Law Park North





**JAMES  
CORNER  
FIELD  
OPERATIONS**

# James Corner Field Operations

## "La Costa Silvestre del Lago": Parque a Orillas del Lago Monona

Aldo Leopold de Madison dijo, "Cuando vemos la tierra como una comunidad a la que pertenecemos, podemos comenzar a usarla con amor y respeto."

"**La Costa Silvestre del Lago**" es una visión para la próxima generación de administración de la tierra de Madison. Agregando al legado de Leopold, la Nación Ho Chunk, John Nolen, Frank Lloyd Wright, e inspirado por los activistas climáticos y defensores de los parques, la costa del lago del futuro ofrece un modelo para el crecimiento urbano y a la vez el retorno a la vida silvestre de Madison.

Situada en un istmo estrecho, la identidad de la ciudad capital de Wisconsin está inexorablemente ligada a su extraordinario paisaje lleno de lagos. "**La Costa Silvestre del Lago**" ofrece una oportunidad sin precedentes para Madison de redefinir su relación con el Lago Monona, y más ampliamente, con la naturaleza en la ciudad. Al conectar la costa del lago a la ciudad con infraestructura verde conectiva, ampliar los territorios para los parques y suavizar su zona costera, el esquema visualiza un lugar en donde la ciudad y la naturaleza sean inseparables.

**Inspirado por la Comunidad:** "La Costa Silvestre del Lago" está inspirada por Madisonianos. Nos involucramos y escuchamos cuidadosamente para conocer lo que aman los miembros de nuestra comunidad acerca de la costa del lago en Madison (el agua, andar en bicicleta y correr en los Senderos de la Ciudad Capital, las vistas increíbles, los eventos acuáticos y a la orilla del lago) como también sus retos más grandes (la dificultad de acceso, un corredor muy estrecho, baja calidad del agua y muy pocos lugares para la familia).

En respuesta, "la Costa Silvestre del Lago" amplifica las cualidades, características y actividades que ya hacen que la costa del Lago Monona sea excelente, incluyendo el Sendero de la Ciudad Capital y el calendario de eventos a la orilla del lago incluyendo esquí acuático, patinaje en el hielo y la competencia de *Iron Man*. De forma simultánea, el esquema aborda los retos importantes de acceso limitado al sitio, la anchura reducida y la baja calidad del agua.

**Una nueva Costa del Lago en Cuatro Pasos:** Organizado por un marco audaz y a la vez flexible, el esquema se compone de cuatro partes claves. Este marco delinea una visión clara y ambiciosa para el Lago Monona, mientras permanece flexible a la opinión del público, las restricciones técnicas, y la financiación a medida que se desarrollen las oportunidades. Esta adaptabilidad será crítica para el éxito a largo plazo del desarrollo futuro del proyecto.

1. Transformar John Nolen Drive en un Bulevar Verde
2. Regresar la costa del lago a la vida silvestre para mejorar la salud del lago y la calidad del agua
3. Integrar la Ciudad con el lago a través de calles, cruces y un tope verdes
4. Animar la costa del lago con muelles y parques que le den la bienvenida a todos

**Lugares a la orilla del lago:** Cuatro parques - cada uno centrado alrededor de un muelle destino - ofrecen servicios recreativos para los residentes cercanos y las familias al igual que para los visitantes regionales. Juntos se sitúan a la orilla del Lago Monona como el centro social de la ciudad y de la región - reflejando los valores, la unión y la buena administración de la comunidad.

1. **Parque Law del Norte y Muelle de King Street:** La transformación del Parque Law del Norte es dramática, creando una nueva fachada del lago para los vecindarios al norte del capitolio, un núcleo cívico y cultural para toda la ciudad y un destino que atraiga a visitantes de la región y más allá. Las mejoras del parque llenan de vida verde y suavizan significativamente la orilla del lago; y crean nuevo acceso al lago y vistas elevadas hacia el lago y la ciudad en el Muelle de King Street. El tope une a John Nolen Drive, creando oportunidades para múltiples conexiones a la ciudad y espacios de reunión a larga escala.
2. **Parque Law del Sur y Muelle de Hamilton Street:** Centrado alrededor del nuevo Muelle de Hamilton Street, el Parque Law del Sur incluye una costa verde densa y muchas oportunidades para tener acceso y disfrutar del lago Monona, incluyendo una playa arenosa, un embarcadero y senderos del paseo a la orilla del lago. Más adentro, el parque incluye lugares para reuniones familiares y sociales, tales como áreas de juego basadas en la naturaleza, arboledas para hamacas, parrillas para barbacoa y áreas para picnic. Las nuevas conexiones a lo largo de Hamilton y Broom Streets, y al Parque Brittingham, enlazan enfáticamente al parque con los vecindarios de rápido crecimiento Basset y State-Langdon, como también con el campus de UW.
3. **Parque Olin y el Muelle Discovery:** En contraste con el Parque Law, lleno de eventos, el Parque Olin se imagina como un parque pasivo y enfocado en la ecología, no muy diferente del Parque Turville, su vecino del sur. El nuevo Parque Olin está formado por el intercambio de tierra, descrito anteriormente, el cual crea un pantanal amplio y protegido, de costas suaves - espacios para explorar un ambiente único a la orilla del lago a través de nuevos senderos para kayak. Ubicado dentro del pantano y los bosques que le rodean habrá una serie de programas basados en la educación acerca de la naturaleza y el medio ambiente incluyendo un centro natural, un parque de bosques y una corriente de agua para aprender a usar kayaks. Serpenteando a través del parque y extendiéndose sobre el agua en el eje con las vistas al capitolio, estará el dramático Muelle Discovery.  
**Monona Terrace y Muelle de Pesca:** Siendo ya uno de los destinos más populares de Madison, el Monona Terrace ofrece impresionantes vistas elevadas del lago y de la ciudad al igual que el mejor lugar en el agua para pescar. Nosotros proponemos dos cambios para ampliar estos activos y convertirlos enfáticamente en lugares abiertos y acogedores para todos: 1) una rampa circular elegante hacia el techo de la terraza, y 2) un muelle amplio de pesca en el agua. Juntos, sumado a las nuevas plantas de espacios verdes, estas intervenciones integrarán completamente el icónico edificio con el parque.

**Los Grandes Parques definen a las Grandes Ciudades:** En definitiva, nuestro objetivo es crear un nuevo y extraordinario parque a la orilla del lago para y con los Madisonianos, con lugares para que la gente juegue y se conecte con la naturaleza y celebren juntos la vida en el lago.